

Senator MANCHIN has a resolution to authorize the Senate legal counsel to defend the Affordable Care Act on behalf of the Senate. We intend to force a vote on his resolution as soon as possible.

Every Republican who claims to be for protections for preexisting conditions ought to vote aye on that resolution. It is the quickest and best way to ensure that the court case against the Affordable Care Act does not remove these protections and the rest of our healthcare law.

Legislation—some of my colleagues are seeking refuge: Well, we will just pass legislation to tweak this or tweak that. Legislation would be difficult and slow and, frankly, unnecessary at this stage. We know how hard it is to do any healthcare legislation in this body.

Unfortunately, a good number of Republicans and President Trump, by their actions, have shown they want to cut healthcare. We are never going to get a deal with Democrats in the Senate—or the House Democrats who are going to be in charge—on doing that.

Senator MANCHIN's proposal is the best and first way to go. I urge my friends on the other side—all who talked about preexisting conditions: Put your money where your mouth is and support Senator MANCHIN's solution. To Leader MCCONNELL, who says he wants to protect preexisting conditions: Bring the Manchin resolution to the floor.

FIRST STEP ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Later this afternoon, the Senate will likely vote on a package of amendments and then final passage of bipartisan criminal justice reform. I wholeheartedly support the bill and intend to vote yes on final passage later today.

Among other important changes, the legislation will give judges more discretion in sentencing for low-level, nonviolent drug offenders who cooperate with the government. It will provide more support and new incentives for prisoners to participate in programming or other productive activities that will better prepare them to return to society as productive individuals, and it will effectively end the practice of juvenile solitary confinement and the cruel shackling of pregnant prisoners.

Despite what some of the opponents of the bill claim, the legislation is certainly not a "get out of jail free" card for violent criminals or sex offenders. That is simply not true.

Rather, the bill makes smart changes to our criminal justice system in ways that make it more fair, more humane, and more just. Individuals serving time in prison for these low-level prison crimes—nonviolent drug offenders—will eventually be released.

It is in the interest of both currently incarcerated individuals and the communities to which they will eventually return to ensure we are doing every-

thing in our power to set them up for successful reintegration into our society so that they don't commit another crime. It is very important and the right thing to do. We need workers. We need productive citizens. We can't take 5 percent of America and just write them off. This bill says that we can't.

I want to commend so many people who did such good work on this bill. I want to thank my colleague Senator DURBIN. This has been a passion of his for many years. I want to thank Senator BOOKER, who was principled. He knew when to hold, knew when to fold. That is why we have such a good bill. I want to thank Senator WHITEHOUSE, who worked really hard to make sure those in prison would get the kind of training and drug treatment they need so that they can be successful and productive citizens when they get outside.

I want to thank some of our Republican colleagues—the Senator from Iowa and the Senator from Utah—who had the courage to stand up and do the right thing here. There will be those on either side who object to things that were left out or included in the bill. As I say often, that is the nature of compromise. You can't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

This bill, with strong bipartisan support, should pass this afternoon with strong bipartisan majorities.

TRIBUTE TO JOE DONNELLY

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, on a matter near and dear to my heart, the great Senator from the great State of Indiana—unfortunately, we are going to be saying goodbye to Members of our caucus who won't be returning to the 116th. This morning, I want to share some words about the senior Senator from Indiana, my dear friend JOE DONNELLY.

Most folks don't know this, but JOE is actually a native New Yorker. Maybe it is because of his affable personality, his agreeableness, his midwestern decency that folks don't think he came from New York, and they are surprised to learn it.

After falling in love with Indiana after college, JOE is now fond of saying: "You can pick where you live, but you can't pick where you're born." JOE, on behalf of all New Yorkers, I officially forgive you for saying that.

But like all of the young Irish Catholic kids from Long Island, JOE's dream was to go to Notre Dame. JOE likes to say that all good Irish Catholic kids are handed an application to Notre Dame, along with their baptism, and go to Notre Dame JOE did, where his long career and life in the State of Indiana began.

Something about JOE's inherent decency drew people toward him. His first foray in politics came when he received a phone call from a local official in the Democratic Party. JOE thought he was calling to ask for a donation, but the official instead asked him if he would like to run for the State legislature.

JOE responded: "OK, I'm eating my cereal; I'll get back to you on that." The people of Indiana and the people of America are glad JOE finished that bowl of cereal and decided a career in public service might suit him.

It didn't happen right away though. JOE lost that first race. A few years later, he found himself coaching the son of his opponent from that race in a local basketball league. At the first practice, sensing trepidation in the young man, JOE hugged him and said: Don't worry. It won't affect your playing time.

That is the kind of little story that shows the decency of JOE DONNELLY—what a good man he is, how he cares about other people's feelings, how he holds no grudges or resentments and always gives his political opponents and, in this case, their children the benefit of the doubt.

He always tried to see things from other people's perspective. That quality is what made him such an effective and well liked Member of this body. It is hard to be both effective and well liked here. JOE is both.

And, of course, he hustled. A DONNELLY day in Indiana is legendary among his staff. It begins before sunrise and ends long after the sun has set.

I travel to every county in my State every year, which is 62. JOE, of course, outdid me. He makes it to each of Indiana's 92 counties every year. When he offers an opinion on where to find the best gas station or fried chicken in Indiana, you know it is coming from real authority.

JOE's dad was a small business owner on Long Island who used to tell him as a boy: JOE, just do the work. That is what JOE DONNELLY did. He did the work. And because he did the work, even in this divided Congress and this divided partisan era, JOE got a whole lot done. He passed right-to-try legislation, which, according to Republican Senator RON JOHNSON, "would not have happened without JOE DONNELLY."

There are going to be people who live decades from now because of his hard work and passion on that bill. JOE worked tirelessly on behalf of veterans as a member of Armed Services, and he passed legislation to reduce the number of military suicides. Again, there are going to be families who don't have to live with suicide of a family member, service member because of JOE's hard work and dedication and political skill in getting this passed.

JOE worked across the aisle with Senator YOUNG, his colleague, to pass a bill that would improve mental health assistance for our police because he knew, coming from a family of police officers, the daily strain that officers undergo in risking their lives for our safety.

I could go on, but suffice it to say that JOE DONNELLY will leave this Chamber with an outstanding bipartisan legacy in his wake.

So at a time when our politics is so angry and divisive, losing someone like